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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (11/2): Palestinians disappointed in Secretary Clinton's statements

Main Stories:

The three dailies run prominent coverage on the Palestinian Authority's (PA) reaction to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's recent statements regarding the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations before Israel agrees to a complete freeze of settlement activities. Al-Quds runs a headline that quotes PA Presidency spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina saying, "America has retreated from its earlier promises and could not fulfill its commitments." Al-Ayyam's leading headline says "Palestinian disappointment from Clinton's statements," while an Al-Hayat Al-Jadida headline reads "Disappointment in Palestine and relief in Israeli regarding the US retreat."

All dailies also carry front page reports on an armed Jewish settler trying to get into Al-Aqsa Mosque yesterday at dawn. The guards of the mosque caught him and prevented him from entering the mosque.

Al-Quds front pages news on PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad reiterating during the opening of the Expo-tech exhibition in Ramallah yesterday that the Palestinian government is committed to building an independent state and developing its institutions despite the Israeli occupation. Fayyad said this has become the daily slogan for the Palestinian people.

Al-Quds Hamas radio reports on the Deputy Chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza Ahamd Bahar noting that Hamas has nothing to fear by holding presidential and legislative elections, but noted that due to the security situation in the West Bank, Hamas will not be able to participate in the elections.

Weekend stories:

Sunday, November 1

The three dailies lead with stories on PA President Mahmoud Abbas's rejection of Secretary Clinton's offer to resume final status negotiations in exchange for Israel halting settlement activities except for the construction of 3,000 settlement units in the West Bank. The deal also totally excluded Jerusalem. Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, President Abbas said "We stressed our position that peace has requirements, and the most important one is the full cessation of settlement activities." Responding to a question about Jerusalem, President Abbas said "it was the main issue of discussion with Secretary Clinton," stressing that "Jerusalem is in danger and the Arabs and Muslims should pay good attention to that." President Abbas added that "peace starts in Jerusalem," and that without Jerusalem, "I don't think there will be peace with Israel."

Al Quds and Al Ayyam run front page stories on Secretary Clinton calling on Israelis and Palestinians to resume negotiations "as soon as possible" without any pre-conditions. According to the reports, Secretary Clinton rejected the Palestinian condition for resuming negotiations with Israel only after the latter agreed to a complete settlement freeze, saying that the issue should be discussed during negotiations.

The three dailies run front page stories on Prime Minister Fayyad condemning an armed attack by a number of settlers in Beit Safafa,

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which led to the injury of five Palestinians. Fayyad stressed that "this terrorist attack by settlers against the lives and properties of defenceless Palestinians shows the need to provide immediate international protection for our people in Jerusalem and its surrounding areas, as well as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, until the establishment of our independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, when the state will be able to fully protect the security of its citizens."

Al Ayyam runs a front page story reporting that the US Congress will vote on a bill that calls upon President Obama and Secretary Clinton to reject any discussion of or support for the Goldstone report. The sponsors of the bill, which is expected to have the support of Democrats and Republicans, stated that the report is "completely biased." The text of the bill also reiterates US support for Israel.

Saturday, October 31

All three dailies run front page coverage of President Abbas's Friday meeting in Abu Dhabi with the Special Envoy George Mitchell. Presidency spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh told Al Ayyam following the meeting, "Despite the continued American efforts ... there is no progress whatsoever regarding the cessation of all settlement activities by Israel."

Attacks by Israeli right-wing extremists and settlers at private homes in Beit Safafa also receive front page coverage in all the dailies. The settlers arrived at the homes as family members were getting ready to go to Friday prayers and started attacking them with metal tools and weapons. A spokesperson for the Israeli police said, "Six Israeli right-wing activists arrived at the Salah family's houses and showed documents claiming their ownership over the houses, demanding the residents evacuate their homes. This led to clashes between the settlers and the local residents." Israeli police forces arrested the Israeli attackers, according to the reports.

The three dailies also run front page coverage on scores of citizens and solidarity activists sustaining injuries as a result of tear gas fired by Israeli soldiers against participants in the weekly anti-wall protests at Ni'ilin and Bil'in. A child was also injured in the Al Ma'sara weekly anti-Wall protests. Palestinian protesters were joined by dozens of international solidarity and peace

activists from Sweden, Spain, and Norway.

Al Quds runs a front page story about Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barakat's plan to build a large forum for hosting events in East Jerusalem. According to the plan, the area would include a large "national park" that will accommodate 30,000-50,000 people. The report noted that this initiative is a part of Barkat's policy to strengthen culture in Jerusalem.

BLOCK QUOTES:

Al-Quds independent daily runs an editorial under the title "The Peace Process Reached a Dead End" (11/02): "The US proposal to resume negotiations without the cessation of settlement activities is very disappointing. It dealt a hard blow to peace efforts and shows the US bias to the illegal Israeli occupation. It also contradicts the earlier goals that President Obama announced regarding the peace process".

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